

Forum on Crime & Prevention
"Building Partnerships for Safer
Neighborhoods"

January 25, 2003

Eastern Senior High School
1700 East Capitol Street, NE

Bi-Lingual (Spanish/English) Session

Issues Raised by the Community:

- Need for bilingual personnel, especially in the 3rd and 4th Districts
- Perception of discrimination by the police
- Better communication between the police, Latino community-based organizations, and other DC agencies

Community-Proposed Recommendations:

- Better follow up on cases involving Latino victims
- Police training to provide better follow up on the complaints of Latino residents
- Greater Latino presence within MPD to better communicate with the Latino community

Asuntos Importantes en la Comunidad:

- Personal bilingue, especialmente 3er y 4to Distritos
- Menos discriminación por parte de la policia
- Mejor comunicación con las organizaciones latinas

Surgerencias de la Comunidad:

- Mejor seguimiento de los casos
- Entrenamiento de la policia a dar un mejor seguimiento de las quejas de los residentes latinos.
- Mayor presencia latina para hablar sobre problemas de la comunidad.

Combating Prostitution & Quality of Life Problems

Issues Raised by the Community:

- Frequent time delays are encountered in police answering calls (particularly to 311); and police fail to respond to calls about prostitution in a timely manner.
- While prostitution has been reduced in some communities, it only seems to be displaced from one neighborhood to another.
- Low-level offenders seem to cycle through the system, committing similar crimes repeatedly.
- The process for removing abandoned vehicles seems to take too long; removing abandoned vehicles from private property is especially difficult.
- Police are not always assertive enough in challenging and removing people who are loitering on street corners and in front of businesses, possibly selling drugs.

Community-Proposed Recommendations:

- Address the life skills, education, drug abuse, and mental health needs of prostitutes and other misdemeanants so that they break the cycle of criminal behavior.
- Investigate the extent to which out-of-town prostitutes and organized crime are involved in the prostitution problem in DC, and respond accordingly.
- Make greater use of “stay-away orders” and the CORE (Conditions of Release Enforcement) program to make sure that prostitutes stay away from areas where they have been arrested previously.
- Expand the community court program outside of 6D.
- Sentence quality-of-life offenders to community service projects that improve the communities in which they committed their offenses.
- Improve the inter-agency response to quality-of-life concerns (e.g. licensing of “massage parlors” that are “fronts” for houses of prostitution).
- Provide specialized customer service training to some MPD personnel (especially station personnel in some districts).

Drug Crime Prevention

Issues Raised by the Community:

- Open air drug markets
- Public apathy
- Police profiling
- Mismanagement of public housing
- Break-up of families
- Lenient laws
- Children selling drugs in school
- Lack of quality economic opportunity

Community-Proposed Recommendations:

- Find a way to close the border.
- Enforce rules at home and in school.
- Increase community involvement.
- Reduce the demand for drugs.
- Take individual responsibility.
- Fund positive programs.
- Improve family ties and increase activities in church.
- Enforce truancy laws.
- Improve education process.
- Improve MPD and DCRA enforcement.
- Make government more accountable.
- Create better programs for drug treatment.

Homicide

Issues Raised by the Community

- There are too many guns on the street.

Community-Proposed Recommendations

- Increase community involvement.
- Check indicators of criminal tendencies —before 5th Grade.

- Improve home environment and increase family involvement.
- Hold parents accountable for the actions of their children.
- Work with parent involvement groups.
- Increase wrap around services offered by non-profit and government agencies.
- Address ongoing problems (don't let them linger).
- Share information with police.
- Expand Project Safe Neighborhoods (US Attorney's Office/MPD).
- Encourage youth-to-youth involvement.
- Lobby legislative branch for more social service programs for children and families.
- Find out what has worked in other cities.
- Develop partnerships – especially with faith-based organizations.
- Increase funds for recreation and education activities for youths to reduce aggression.
- Evaluate community-based/government program impacts.
- Recommend grief counseling and support for victims along with sentencing by judges.
- Begin prevention with families.
- Employ mechanisms to change behavior.
- Watch your children.
- Know what your children are doing at all times or most of the time.
- Increase penalties.
- Share information between police districts and jurisdictions.
- Get assistance for victims/families.
- Use programs that work (e.g. Clergy-Police Community Partnership).
- Collaborate on community strengths.
- Become personally involved with as many youths as possible, as soon as possible.
- Get the word out to the community.
- Identify and address risk factors.
- Get information to the people not at this meeting.
- Hold government agencies accountable.
- Eradicate illiteracy.

Prevention Programs

Issues Raised by the Community:

- 911 response times from call to scene of the crime
- Unavailable PSA information

Community-Proposed Recommendations:

- Organize a block captain program.
- Share information between block captains.
- Establish block captains' lists of residents who live on each block.
- Train block captains to report crime and identify assailants with details, such as shoes of assailant, facial hair, and clothing.
- Use Office of Citizen Complaint Review (www.occrc.dc.gov) for police accountability.
- Use anger constructively.
- Build neighborhood networks.
- Develop handbooks on how to start neighborhood groups and organize a community.
- Develop corporate and local business partnerships.
- Hold offenders accountable.
- Remove pay phones.
- Use crime data.
- Communicate via neighborhood e-mail.
- Hold regular constituent meetings.
- Avoid preventable crime.
- Create a "How to" booklet with responsibilities for citizens.
- Educate PSA officers about who to know and how to find the names of people in the community (i.e. block captains, association presidents).
- Place tips for fighting crime on the MPD website. (These tips are already on the MPD website at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/tips.shtm>.)
- Use 311 when it is not an emergency.
- Use language "crime in progress" when calling 911, to get immediate response when there is a crime in progress.
- Reconfigure overall size of PSA's.

- Align PSA's with ANC's.
- Redraw PSA's with community involvement.
- Train police on decision-making.
- Re-evaluate MPD policy for arresting individuals in public space.
- Direct dollars towards prevention.
- Evaluate program effectiveness.

Re-Entry

Issues Raised by the Community:

- Transitional places for ex-offenders insufficient
- Coordination of agencies and services missing
- Federal government commitment to rehab inmates lacking
- Halfway houses inadequate
- Disconnect between providers and recipients
- 2,000 inmates return home each year – that number is growing
- 300 employees at CSOSA
- Controls for re-entry into the community unidentified
- CSOSA accountability tours lacking
- Rehab services for DC Corrections inmates not provided
- District inmate illiteracy a big issue

Community-Proposed Recommendations:

- Bond ex-offenders in order for them to do business with the DC government.
- Include the community with regard to skill transitions and employment.
- Implement a prison-to-work program.
- Create a multidisciplinary response to women/men's unique needs by District government agencies such as the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Mental Health (DMH), DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), and the Department of Employment Services (DOES).
- Provide an informative questionnaire for citizens dispelling myths of halfway houses.

- Press the Federal Bureau of Prisons to implement an employment placement program that works.
- Encourage the community to accept the residents who left.
- Work toward successful integration.
- Reintegrate ex-offenders into the community not warehouses.
- Map training programs back to economic opportunity in the community.
- Establish transitional houses for ex-offenders with accountability outcomes.
- Instill accountability for rehabilitation in prison (not happening at DC Corrections).
- Provide credentialed skills training in prison.

Trilingual Session (Korean/ Mandarin/Vietnamese)

Issues Raised by the Community:

911 Emergency and 311 Calls—What is the difference?

Dial 311:

- If you see any suspicious behavior, such as the sale of drugs.
- If you feel uncomfortable with a situation.
- If a customer is screaming and yelling at you for routine ID checks.
- If you see people drinking in public.

Dial 911:

- For a quick response to an emergency or a fire.

Language Accessibility in MPD—What if I don't speak English very well?

- If English is not your first language, let the 311 or 911 operator know that. Say, "I don't speak English. I speak Korean," for example.
- The operator will connect you to a language line to reach an interpreter.

Victim's Response—When police arrive on the crime scene, what do I do?

- Be sure to get the CCN, or the crime report number from the police officer or detective.
- Try to remember what the offender was wearing, his or her height, length of hair, and other descriptive characteristics.

Police Response—What can I do if I am not happy with the response of the police officer?

- The police department has a rank structure. Ask to speak with the sergeant or other supervisor.

- File a citizen complaint. Forms are translated in various languages, including Korean, Mandarin, and Vietnamese.
- Request a Korean, Mandarin, or Vietnamese-speaking officer if you have limited English-speaking skills. The Asian Liaison Unit staffs at least one Korean-speaking officer and has access to other officers and detectives who may speak your language.

Police Service Area (PSA)—Know your PSA.

- It is important for you to get to know your Lieutenant or PSA officer.
- Each month, there is a meeting for the PSA in which you live or work.
- Attend PSA meetings in your area, and voice your concerns. The lieutenant has the responsibility to solve the crime or problem you raise. Show you care for the community in which you work. If you see drug sales occurring in or near your store, call the police.
- To determine your PSA, call the police station in your district.

Card Minors—Make sure you check everyone's ID when you sell:

- Liquor
- Cigarettes

Burglary—When someone has burglarized a grocery store three times in the last five months, what is a possible solution to this problem?

- Attend the PSA meeting and ask for “special attention” from the lieutenant.
- Make sure you have a video camera that is recording to tape.
- Consider investing in an alarm system that deters potential burglars.

Crime Victim Assistance Program—Do I have to be a citizen to be eligible for the program?

- You do not have to be a citizen, or a legal permanent resident.
- The only criterion is that you were the victim of a crime that occurred in the District of Columbia.

Vehicular Crime Prevention

Issues Raised by the Community:

- Police apprehend car thieves as young as 10-12 years old.
- Juveniles know they won't be prosecuted.
- MPD reports that some juveniles are apprehended three to four times a month.

- Parents get mad if their children are accused of stealing a car even when they are caught driving the car.
- Most juveniles who are caught stealing cars are either truant or they have been kicked out of school.
- District of Columbia residents pay the highest automobile insurance rates in the country, according to District Insurance Commissioner Lawrence Mirel.
- The District's high insurance rates are a negative for attracting new residents to the city and increasing the tax base.
- It appears that hundreds of District residents register their cars out-of-state to avoid the high insurance rates.
- Certain neighborhoods in Ward 7 are besieged with auto theft. Residents feel they are prisoners in their homes.
- Court system is arduous.
- There is no lack of laws to solve car thefts; a better process for prosecuting juveniles is needed.
- New tags (registration stickers) on front of automobiles make it hard for police to track stolen cars.
- Paperwork for prosecuting juveniles is different from that of adults.
- Police officers have to appear in court to file a criminal complaint against a juvenile.
- Police officers arrive in court at 8 am; judges often don't arrive until noon.
- An officer often waits all day before his case comes up in court—he is off the street and earning overtime while waiting to file a complaint against a juvenile.
- Court process is so tedious that many police officers avoid arresting juveniles—particularly because they know that the courts rarely prosecute juvenile car thieves.
- Stolen cars often end up in chop shops. Parts of a car are worth 50 percent more than the actual value of the car.
- Chop shops are often located in alleys disguised as home repair shops.

Community-Proposed Recommendations:

- Use an alarm or club to prevent theft; thieves tend to ignore cars with these devices. Use whatever means possible not to have your car stolen.
- Give up your car, if apprehended by carjackers; it is not worth risking your life to keep a car.

- Do not leave your car running with keys in ignition while car heats up during winter months.
- Work with DCPS to streamline truancy program.
- Offer juveniles positive alternatives to stealing cars.
- Develop an alternative District program for first-time car thieves so that they don't become career criminals.
- Invite judges and prosecutors to participate in the next discussion on vehicular crime.
- Invite insurance companies to participate in forum to discuss what the District has to do to lower automobile insurance premiums.
- Arrange for MPD auto theft division to speak to students at school assemblies in neighborhoods that have a large number of juveniles caught stealing cars.
- Institute alternative programs for juveniles who are kicked out of District schools or who are truant.
- Increase funding in District budget to handle the increase in vehicular crime.
- Involve MPD to help cab drivers prevent robberies.
- Involve MPD to help cab drivers prevent carjacking. (MPD's Detective Straub promised that he would meet with the Taxicab Commission to discuss public safety.)
- Do something about taxicab drivers who refuse to take fares to certain areas.
- Provide radios to school crossing guards.

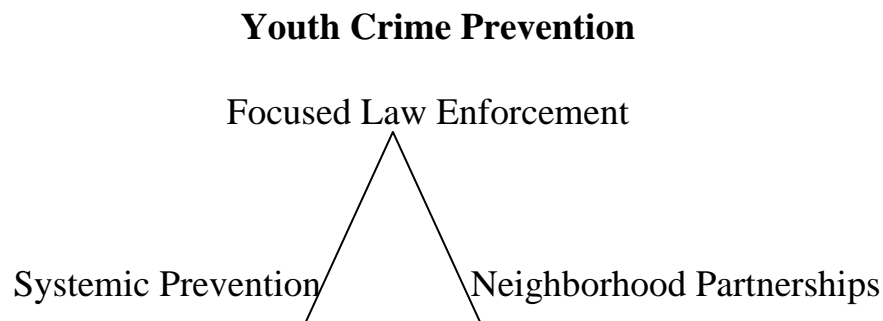
Victims' Issues

Issues Raised by the Community:

- Police do not let folks know where/how to take next step.
- More police are needed in areas.
- DC Housing Police need assistance.
- Neighborhoods need streetlights.
- Victims' needs are not addressed.
- Police need to do a better job of dealing with trauma in neighborhoods as a whole.
- Difficulty exists in getting reports accepted and implemented/MPD.

Community-Proposed Recommendations:

- Provide training for system responders.
- Develop comprehensive system of care for all victims.
- Send resource list (translated) to ANC's.
- Keep the victim informed all along the way.
- Provide/locate affordable housing.
- Provide/locate jobs for victims.
- Get information out to victims about how to get reports/resources.
- Provide sensitivity training for officers.
- Add knowledge of resources of crisis response teams.



Issues Raised by the Community:

- Police Boys and Girls Clubs provide limited services to young people over 18.
- Need clarification about truancy policies and procedures.

Community-Proposed Recommendations:

- Improve relationships with young people—prevention through education and empowerment.
- Communicate effort across agencies—help young people plug-in to services.
- Focus on truancy—ask bigger question of why young people are not going to school.
- Bridge gap between youths and police.
- Focus on root problems of conflicts.

- Partner clergy with developmental activities.
- Enforce the Compulsory School Youth Attendance Act —young people are truant at early age.
- Reinstate DCPS truancy procedure.
- Create public awareness campaign similar to immunization campaign.
- Promote early intervention and parent accountability.
- Provide places for young people to heal.
- Increase funds for mental health services.
- Provide economic opportunities for young people —start early.
- Positive signs in physical environment to inspire young people.
- Provide child support for incarcerated fathers—meet economic needs of children with incarcerated fathers. Follow the New Jersey model.
- Testify in cases safely.
- Embrace young people.
- Provide more money for youth development: recreation and schools.
- Engage young people in community improvement projects.
- Provide access to mental health services and crisis intervention.
- Create Teen Court Program for youth mediation.
- Utilize the 3 C's: communication, collaboration, and consistency.
- Create safe places for young people to talk; foster skills development of young people; pay attention to young people.
- Revive vocational programs in DCPS.
- Provide options for young people who don't intend to go to college.
- Create a web of support for single parents' homes.
- Send messages to young people that adults care and have high expectations of them.
- Put police in high schools.